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SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATES COOPERATION WITH REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

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¶1. SUMMARY. The Security Council held a debate on cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations on January 13, following a two day retreat hosted by the Secretary-General for the heads of some regional organizations. Participants offered their support for greater cooperation, emphasizing the local knowledge of regional organizations, their proximity to crisis areas, and their ability to mediate conflicts. Most speakers encouraged the use of mechanisms such as annual meetings or liaison relationships to further cooperation. Most Council members repeated previously expressed views on cooperation with regional organizations. END SUMMARY.

¶2. Following a two-day retreat with UN officials hosted by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, representatives of eleven regional and sub-regional organizations on January 13 participated in a Security Council debate on cooperation with the UN. Representatives from the League of Arab States (LAS), African Union (AU), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization of American States (OAS), Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), participated along with Council members.

¶3. Opening the debate, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recalled that Chapter VIII of the UN Charter envisioned the UN working together with regional organizations, consistent with the provisions of the charter, to prevent, manage and resolve crises. Ban said that retreat participants had identified several areas where cooperation could be strengthened, including coordination and communication among the respective intergovernmental bodies and secretariats, the need for better clarity in mediation arrangements, the need to strike the right balance between flexibility and efficiency in peacekeeping deployments, and ensuring that humanitarian assistance reaches those in need in a timely manner and "in accordance with existing principles." Ban emphasized that coordination "is not an end in itself," and that success would not be measured by process or mechanisms. Instead, political will on the part of Member States would be crucial to make real improvements in the lives of those most in need.

The aim of the UN in its cooperation with regional organizations is to achieve greater flexibility in its activities, Ban said, and to make use of each partner's comparative advantage.

¶4. The invited speakers and Security Council members to a great extent echoed the Secretary-General's themes in their statements, but some raised additional points. The

Secretary-General of the League of Arab States said that regional and sub-regional organizations needed to commit to follow certain agreed rules and procedures for action under Chapter VIII of the Charter. He called for the creation of a coordination mechanism under the auspices of the Secretary-General, similar to the G-20, which would include representatives of regional organizations and UN agencies, and would address issues related to climate change, disease and hunger. The Secretary-General of the OIC and the Permrep of Australia (representing the PIF) also said it was important to address the root causes of conflict through socio-economic development. The Secretaries-General of the CSTO and SCO emphasized cooperation on interdiction of drug and human trafficking and efforts to combat terrorism. The Deputy Secretary-General of NATO emphasized the importance of bringing military and civilian means closer together when addressing conflict situations. He pointed out that institutional participants in peacekeeping operations typically do not train or plan together, and are not joined up in the field, and he called for the establishment of strong liaison relationships to enable better cross-coordination.

15. Security Council members all reinforced the importance of UN cooperation with regional organizations, while reiterating previously established views on peace and security. Uganda said that the capacity of the UN to address threats to international peace and security had become overstretched and that regional and sub-regional organizations had better local knowledge, proximity to conflicts, and the capability to respond quickly. Uganda also stressed that regional organizations such as the African Union need the necessary financial resources and technical capacity to carry out missions. Similarly, Nigeria said regional organizations

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such as ECOWAS should take the leading role in peace and security issues in their regions, with the international community providing the requisite support. Mexico recalled the important role of regional organizations in combating trafficking of small arms and light weapons. Brazil underscored the importance of cooperation between regional organizations and the UN to address the root causes of conflicts. Russia said that enhancing the role of regional and sub-regional organizations needed to occur within the context of "maintaining the prerogatives of this universal organization and its Security Council." EU members of the Council-- U.K., France, and Austria, noted the large contributions of the EU to capacity building for regional organizations, and the EU role as a bridge in crisis areas such as Chad, where it deployed until the UN was prepared to take over. Lebanon echoed the Arab League's call for an annual meeting of regional organizations with the Security Council, as well as the provision of material support for regional organizations. Referring to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Lebanon called for "an end to occupation," "ensuring the right of self-determination," and called for a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East.

16. Ambassador DiCarlo emphasized the comparative advantage of regional organizations in the prevention or resolution of conflicts. She welcomed the role of the AU and ECOWAS in managing recent crises Guinea, and urged ASEAN to press for internal political dialogue in Burma as a step toward credible elections. Ambassador DiCarlo also affirmed U.S. support to build the capacity of organizations such as the AU to carry out peace operations.

17. The full meeting record (document number S/PV.6257) can be found under the "Meetings" heading on the Security Council web page at: www.un.org
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